

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMBAT COVERAGE PRINCIPLES:
WILL THEY SERVE US IN THE FUTURE?

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

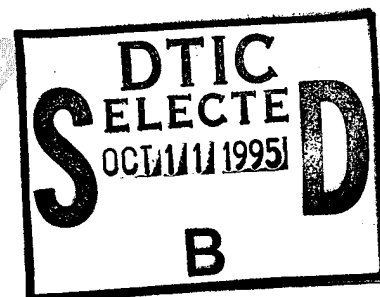
by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1995

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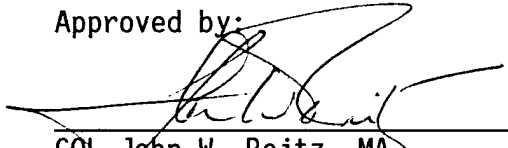
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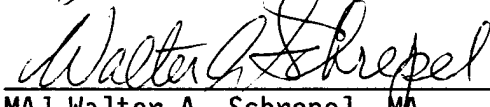
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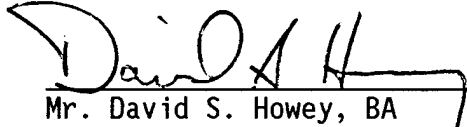
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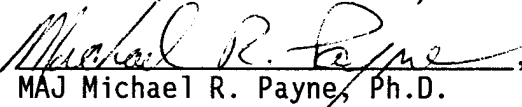
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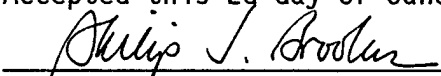

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ABSTRACT

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMBAT COVERAGE PRINCIPLES: WILL THEY SERVE US IN THE FUTURE? by LCDR William N. Nagy, USN, 88 pages.

The major purpose of this study was to determine if the Department of Defense Combat Coverage Principles were valid and sufficient to meet the demands of both the media and the requirements of the military in future conflicts. This study also examined the evolution of the military/media relationship to gain insight into how and why the principles were developed. Data were collected by a review of existing literature. Validity of each principle was established initially by the fact that the body that developed the principles was comprised of representatives of both the media and the military. Validity was further established by analyzing the data to determine whether the principles informed the public in a timely manner, provided access to the press, and did not compromise operational security. Each principle was also studied for sufficiency. Would each principle as written provide the commander sufficient guidance to meet the demands of the media and the military? Results indicated that, although valid, the principles as written are insufficient to meet future demands. Results indicated that without more specific guidance the military would not afford the media the opportunity to adequately cover a military operation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to determine whether current Department of Defense Combat Coverage Principles (Appendix) will adequately allow for coverage of the next conflict while still maintaining necessary operational security. Although these guidelines adequately identify the issues that must be addressed, and as such are a step in the right direction, they are not sufficient to address the problems of the next conflict.

The principles as written fail to provide military commanders enough specific guidance to adequately incorporate the media into military operations. A review of the history of this relationship demonstrates that without specific guidance commanders tended to err on the side of caution. During this survey, Commanders' actions had precluded the media from fully reporting a conflict, and on many occasions more specific guidance may have averted some problems.

A historical review of the military/media relationship illustrates past shortcomings in this association. These shortcomings have been addressed several times in recent years, and the last effort resulted in the current Department Of Defense (DOD) coverage principles. Each effort tried to solve the problems of the last conflict, but did not look forward to try to address potential problems of the next conflict.

The root problem between the media and the military is the conflict based on the media's need for free and independent reporting and the military's corresponding need for secrecy. The DOD principles state that open and independent coverage will be the principle means of coverage. The principles as written do not provide sufficient guidance on how to achieve this. For example, the principles address providing access to military units, but the focus of providing access should be on operations and not on units.

The use of press pools has also been widely criticized by both the media and the military. The media states that these pools do not work.¹ The military believes that pools are too cumbersome, and that they use vital logistical assets that must be diverted from operational units. Although the concept of pools is addressed in the principles, it falls short in determining numbers and members of these pools.

The problem with the military's understanding of what free and independent reporting is, and developing specific and acceptable policies for press pools are but two areas of concern with the current principles. If mutually agreeable and effective principles are to be developed, those developing the procedures must understand how the military-media relationship evolved. Both institutions must be involved in the development of these procedures to successfully generate, and then incorporate, any principles of combat coverage. The United States, as well as other countries, has handled the problem of military-media relations in a variety of ways with limited success.

Background

The military and the media are among the most influential institutions in the United States. They have both been tasked with the defense of the U.S. Constitution, but they have also been at odds over how to accomplish their respective missions and cover a military conflict. Their dichotomy in views was summed up by Otis Pike in an article about the Grenada Invasion in 1983. He stated that: "Our military is trained to win. Winning requires secrecy and an image of skill, courage, stamina, strength and sacrifice. Our media are trained to report. Reporting must avoid secrecy and must also report blunders, cowardice, exhaustion, weakness and agony, all of which demoralize us."²

These two ideologies have historically been in basic conflict. Generally the military feels that media coverage should be allowed, but that this coverage should not pose a threat to operational security or endanger troops. This attitude implies some control over the media. The media on the other hand believes that, in order for them to accomplish their task of informing the people, they must see events unfold first hand. Additionally, the media reject the need for control because they also feel that they can be trusted not to report events that would compromise military operations.

The number of journalists and the capability of systems to report have increased greatly in recent years. The ever increasing number of journalists covering a conflict, and the advances in technology, making the filing of a story easier and faster, intensifies the problem creating an even greater need to resolve the basic conflict.

From a handful of war correspondents in the Crimean War in 1854, to 147 on D-Day in Normandy 1944, and eventually 1,300 in DESERT STORM, the conflict created by growing number of media requiring access increases all the time. Media access should therefore be incorporated in all stages of operational³ planning. This would serve to accommodate the predictably larger numbers of media requesting access or negotiate what number will be permitted access.

The initial answer to the problem of balancing access with security was censorship. As early as the early 1700s, the then British colonies in America had a censorship law in the books.⁴ In early conflicts, such as the Revolution, this did not pose much of a problem since there were few reporters and even fewer readers, but, by the time of the American Civil War, the population's interest in and demand for information about wars grew. Censorship was seen as clearly not the answer.

The Vietnam Conflict would be the first time that the U.S. military did not use censorship as a method of controlling coverage.⁵ As a substitute for censorship the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) developed a set of ground rules to guide reporters in covering stories, but this change did not create a better military media relationship. By the end of the Vietnam conflict the military-media relationship had hit its lowest point. The reason for this was that the military and the administration in Washington had embarked on a campaign to deceive the press and the public as to actual events and the extent of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The military, in turn, blamed the media for poisoning public support for the war. The negative attitude

between the media and the military that resulted from this break of trust still existed at the time of the U.S. military intervention in Grenada in 1983.

When the U.S. decided to invade Grenada in 1983, the task force commander Vice Admiral Metcalf decided not to allow the media on the island for the first two days.⁶ The outcry that came from this resulted in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Vessey forming a panel to address the problem. Major General (retired) Winant Sidle was designated as chairman, and his panel included representatives from the media as well as the military.

This collaborative effort did provide recommendations, but these recommendations only led to new problems. The most widely criticized recommendation from the panel was the establishment of press pools. DOD first used one of these pools to cover the "Tanker War" in the Persian Gulf in 1987. A few problems were noted in this first test of the concept, but overall the pool system seemed to work. The pools were again used during the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989. The general consensus from this second effort was that the pools did not work. For example, correspondents in the Panama pool arrived late (up to four hours after the fighting had started), while reporters who were not in the pool were already there. Further, according to the media, the pool was rarely where the action was.⁷

The problems with these pools was not solved by 1990 for DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, but the system provided the media access not otherwise available. Saudi Arabian restrictions precluded correspondents from arriving in the country on their own.⁸ Initially,

the pools were the only way for the media to enter the country. According to the media, the problems with the pools experienced in Panama still existed in DESERT STORM. The pools were not deployed in a timely fashion, and the press complained that the military was manipulating them with what they were allowed to cover. The employment of pools, however, was not the only problem.

In DESERT STORM the U.S. military used a security review system to ensure operational security. This system replaced the historic use of censorship to safeguard soldiers' lives. The numbers of contested reports under this security review process would imply that the system was valid. Of 1,351 pool reports, only five were forwarded to Washington for review. Only one of these five reports was viewed as a compromise of security.⁹ The editor of that report agreed, and the report was changed prior to print.

The main complaint from the media, however, was that this system of review was too time consuming and that by the time some of the reports could be submitted for print they were too late and the news was stale. Despite the media's complaints of DESERT STORM, the American public felt that coverage was good and perhaps excellent.¹⁰ As a result of DESERT STORM, DOD cooperated with another commission--the Wheaton Commission--that would address the issues. The commission was comprised of members of the military and the press. Their charter was to establish a set of principles to govern this relationship in the future.

Research question

Are the DOD Combat Coverage Guidelines valid and sufficient to meet Military requirements and Media demands?

Hypothesis

The DOD Combat Coverage Guidelines are valid insofar as they identify problem areas, but will be insufficient to meet the situational requirements of war correspondents and operational commanders and avert problems at the outset of the next conflict.

Assumptions

The main assumption is that the American public has the right to know what its military is doing. This assumption precludes the use of censorship as a guideline.

This thesis also assumes that the press has a constitutional right to cover military operations as the means to inform the public.

The combat coverage principles as written came as a result of our latest large scale military operation--DESERT STORM. The media claimed that DOD policies for combat coverage throughout the conflict were in violation of The First and Fifth Amendments to the United States Constitution. The fact that DOD has published a set of guidelines asserts that DOD also believes that the media has a constitutional right to cover military operations. Whether or not this is this case is a subject for further study and will not be further addressed in this project.

Definitions

Accreditation. Accreditation is defined as the formal recognition of a media representative by a U.S. commander in a theater of operations.

The Commander. In subsequent chapters the military entity will be referred to as the Commander. This refers to the military commander at the operational or theater level. Military men and women at all levels will have to deal with the media, but the operational level is the most critical.

Correspondent. A correspondent is defined as a journalist, press reporter, photographer, columnist, editor, publisher, radio or television reporter, commentator, camera operator, and newsreel or other documentary picture production employee accredited to the DOD and regularly engaged in the collection and dissemination of news to the public.

Ground Rules. Guidelines on information of U.S. operations or troops, which can be reported and are agreed upon by both the media and the military. For the purpose of this project the terms "guideline" and "ground rule" can be used synonymously.

The Media. News media representatives and organizations will be referred to as the media. This includes the printed media as well as television and radio.

National Media Pool. Approximately a twelve-person team representing U.S. media that deploys to areas of operations overseas. Their purpose is to provide news coverage of DOD operations where adequate news coverage is not available for the American public. The pool normally deploys members from both print and broadcast media. Pool news products are provided to other national and local media as a condition of the pool agreement.

For the purposes of this thesis, to handle the media is not to manipulate or use in a negative or unethical way. To "handle" the media is to incorporate them in the plan so that their actions are not completely unknown.

Limitations of the Study

How technological advances will affect the effectiveness of these guidelines is unclear. Technology will certainly play a great role in combat coverage, but considering future advances should be the topic of a separate thesis and as such is beyond the scope of this project.

There is reason to believe that the printed press and television have different effects on the public. These differences may call for a different treatment during the time of the conflict, but is beyond the scope of this project. For the purposes of this project both television and print will be considered equally.

Significance of the Study

The proper balance of operational security and combat coverage of military conflicts is essential to the success of the mission. The American public has the right to know how its military is being used. Coverage of wars has been historically poor. Even as recent as DESERT STORM, the military and the media still did not work well together to accomplish their shared mission of informing the American public.

The abbreviated nature of DESERT STORM precluded any further deterioration of the military/media relationship, but the U.S. may not be as fortunate next time. The military and the media must work out a

relationship that both allows coverage and ensures operational security. Ultimately, it is up to the military to make it happen.

The combat coverage guidelines are designed to do just that. By looking at historical shortfalls in how wars were covered and reviewing attitudes, this thesis will determine whether these guidelines will be adequate during the next conflict. Now is the time to review these guidelines and identify any shortfalls. With current technology and imminent advances, the potential for communications is unlimited. This coupled with the ease of travel, almost ensures that correspondents will be at the site of conflicts before the military (as in Somalia) and will have the ability to transmit their story independent of outside help.

Now is the time to consider this relationship and determine a course of action to better serve the military, the media, and the American public.

ENDNOTES

¹Everette Dennis, "The Media at War: The Press and The Persian Gulf Conflict," A Report of The Gannett Foundation (New York: A Gannett Foundation Program at Columbia University, 1991), 28.

²Winant Sidle, "A Battle Behind the Scenes: The Gulf War Reheats the Military-Media Controversy", Military Review 71 no. 9 (September 1991): 52.

³In this context operational planning simply addresses the planning of operations and not the operational vice strategic or tactical level of war.

⁴Sidle, 53.

⁵Ibid.; Everette, 14; Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Mythmaker (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 4.

⁶Everette, 15; William Kennedy, The Military and The Media: Why the press Cannot be Trusted to Cover a War (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 114.

⁷Sidle, 56.

⁸Pete Williams, "The Press and the Persian Gulf War," Parameters 21 no. 3, (Autumn 1991): 17.

⁹Ibid., 6.

¹⁰Everette, 82-84.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the Department of Defense Principles of Combat Coverage are valid and sufficient to meet the needs of the media as well as the military. A historical review of this relationship will provide insight into how and why these principles were developed. This review will also develop a foundation on which to determine if these principles address past problems.

Existing literature documents this relationship well. Phillip Knightley's The First Casualty provides the single best source of information, concerning the evolution of the military/media relationship between the Crimean War and Vietnam and, as such, is cited extensively throughout this review.

By all accounts the "war correspondent" was introduced during the Crimean War, and it is here that an understanding of how the military/media relationship evolved and eventually led to the development of the DOD principles will begin.

Crimean War 1854

The Crimean war was the first time that an organized effort was made to report a war to a public using the services of a civilian reporter.¹ The war correspondent, as known today, was born during this time. The role these correspondents would play was unknown, and there

was certainly no relationship between these correspondents and their military counterparts. They both had a job to do and, at least initially, would work independent of each other.

Before 1854 and the war in Crimea, news editors, primarily British, had to rely on foreign journalists for information on the wars that were occurring abroad. They also paid junior officers to report the news via letters from the front. Both these arrangements were inadequate because the newspapers were restricted to late and highly personal and limited reports. These reports tended to be untimely because these "privateers" were first soldiers and then reporters. At the time no one sought to fix the situation because popular demand for war news was low.²

The war in Crimea would change war coverage forever as the British public took great interest in what was happening on the front. The country, as a whole, adamantly opposed Russian expansionism into Europe. Queen Victoria herself wrote that "the war is popular beyond belief."³ The London Times, taking into account this change of sentiment, decided to use a free-lance reporter by the name of William Howard Russell to cover the war effort. Initially, he was sent to Malta to cover the Royal Guard. The London Times was so impressed by the quality of Russell's work from Malta they decided to send him to the front.

His reporting of the war was brutally direct. He painted a grim picture of how the British soldiers were treated by their commanders. Russell wrote: "The management is infamous and the contrast offered by

our proceeding to the conduct of the French most painful. Could you believe it - the sick have no bed to lie upon."

He conferred with his editor about the propriety of reporting the war in this fashion. His editor, Delane, told him to continue to submit reports. London would determine what was to be printed. Neither Russell nor The London Times wanted to be labelled unpatriotic. Delane did not print everything. What he did not print he circulated to members of the cabinet.⁴ This marked the first time the press would influence the lot of the average soldier.

Another effect of this reporting was that Russell fell out of grace with the British on-scene commander in Crimea. In September 1854 Lord Raglan, the British General-in-Chief, refused to recognize Russell as a legitimate correspondent and denied him all logistical support to include access to the front. The British forces were about to confront a vastly superior Russian force in a major battle at the Alma. Without this recognition, Russell had the problem of determining how best to cover the battle. He felt that if he was to go to the front he should be in some kind of uniform, so he hastily put together a uniform and bought a horse. His second, and greatest, problem was where to go to best see the battle. He tried to attach himself to any commander headed toward the front, but they all refused to take him with them. In the end, he spent the battle in the rear interviewing soldiers returning from the front.⁵

He found many eyewitness reports to be contradictory and was not sure how anyone could report on something they had not seen. Russell, however, pieced together what facts he could from these reports and

reported a story where all British soldiers were "gallant" and "the enemy terrible," which was eagerly read in London.

Russell's situation in the Crimea improved after The London Times applied pressure on the military establishment. On October 25th Russell reported on a Russian counterattack on Balaclava. This time he was allowed to observe the battle from a plateau that overlooked the Balaclava. Russell described it as "the stage and those upon it are seen from the box of a theater." Russell blamed the disaster that ensued:

To the distance of Lord Raglan to the field and secondly to his failure to understand. . . that he saw more than his generals below could see; therefore he did not take the pains in wording his orders to make it so plain to them that explanation of his meaning was not needed.⁶

This British sequence of action eventually would lead Lord Cardigan to the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade. The British public would not only have a direct account of the battle, but they would also have a correspondent's perception of who was to blame.

By October of 1854, Russell had continuously reported the deplorable conditions of the British Army. Lord Raglan, in another attempt to quiet him, accused him of security breeches in that in one of his reports he had reported Artillery positions, gun powder requirements, and identification of specific units. The London Times (Delane) agreed that this did, indeed, pose an operational security problem and that Russell should be checked. He told the government that he would "confine all (his) correspondents exclusively to the version of past events."⁷ This marked the first time that the media had displayed

a willingness to police themselves in order not to compromise a military operation.

In June of 1855 after a failed attempt to seize Sevastopol, Lord Raglan died. His successor Sir Codrington issued an order that prohibited any correspondent from publishing any information beneficial to the enemy. This marked another first in the military/media relationship--censorship.⁸

Russell's coverage of the Crimean War provided the British public with as close to the truth as any before. This marked the first time that an Army had been subject to independent scrutiny. Russell did an adequate job of passing on information to the British public, but he failed to understand and analyze what he was seeing. He attacked the shortcomings of individuals, such as Lord Raglan who should share part of the blame, but he failed to determine the root of the problem which was the British military system.

The arrival of the war correspondent gave the military a direct link back to the public which it served. Regardless of how Russell covered the war, it was evident that the coverage of wars had changed. Russell's coverage demonstrated that the press can have a great impact on what battlefield commanders do in the field. He also demonstrated that journalists can be very resourceful and that the story will get out. The point of learning for the military should have been that the media is a powerful tool that the commander must consider in his operations. This lesson was lost on American military commanders of the time as will become evident as coverage of The Civil War is reviewed.

The Civil War (1860-1865)

The Civil War marked the first time that war correspondents came out in force to cover a conflict. The military, still unsure of how to deal with the media, took the approach of trying to achieve total control over what information the media passed on to a very interested public.

This new attitude was immediately evident in 1860, when 500 correspondents showed up to cover the American Civil War for the North alone.⁹ Not only did interest and coverage increase during this time, but technological advances were also changing the face of the media. During the Crimean War, some dispatches went via the Mediterranean submarine electric cable, but it was not until the American Civil War that the telegraph was available on a large scale.¹⁰ These advances meant that not only was coverage more extensive, but it was immediate. The public could now read about what happened yesterday, instead of what someone thought happened a week ago.

Another technological advance that was noted for the first time during a war was the use of photography to record events. Even though photography was available, however, it failed to meet the public's demands because of limitation of printing. Newspapers were unable to use Brady's (or anyone else's) photographs because they lacked the equipment and techniques required to transfer photographs to newsprint. The visual accounting of this conflict, therefore, was mainly done by artists. These accounts tended to be exaggerated and inaccurate, but the Civil War made it obvious that the public wanted a visual accounting

of events. The medium for achieving this would evolve greatly over the next one hundred years.

News organizations still did not have a pool of war-seasoned veterans to report the war. The most important qualification was a reporter's ability to use the telegraph.¹¹ Mail service at the time was slow, with some letters taking a month to be delivered, which resulted in many correspondents being tethered to areas adjacent to a telegraph station. The news organizations were slaves of a budding new technology. They could not afford the added time required to file stories other than by telegraph or by venturing far from a station because the American public was starving for news about the war.

This demand for news resulted in editors making incredible demands from their correspondents. Wilbur F. Stone, of The Chicago Times, relayed to one of his correspondents "Telegraph fully all news you can get and when there is no news send rumors."

Despite the somewhat legendary status of some Civil War reporters, the truth is that many of their accounts lacked accurate and confirmed information. In some cases correspondents intentionally lied about events in attempts to "romanticize" the war. It was felt by many that reporting the true atrocities of the war, instead of romantic fabrications, would result in stories not being picked up or circulation to decline.

The War Department was also not without fault in the less than accurate reporting of events during the war. Censorship was extended to criticism of officials and the conduct of the war, as well as matters of operational security. The first example was Winfield Scott's (General-

in-Chief of Northern Forces) stopping the transmission of all accounts regarding Bull Run.¹² William H. Russell's true account of Bull Run (which ran in The London Times and was relayed to New York) resulted in such a fury against him that he was advised to seek protection inside the British Embassy.¹³

There were many accounts of officials altering reports to make things look better. The Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton altered the figures of the surrender of Harper's Ferry. The initial report submitted was that 10,000 troops had surrendered. Stanton changed this number to 6,000 and revised it again to 4,000. The actual figure was 11,200.¹⁴ Stanton eventually resorted to arresting correspondents, suspending newspapers, and threatening to court martial editors for violations of his censorship rules. On one occasion he "actually issued orders for Henry Wing of the New York Tribune to be shot for refusing to hand over a dispatch he had written for his newspaper."¹⁵

Reporters of the time were also ignorant of war and unable to discern what events were truly historically significant. One account states that "no correspondent at Gettysburg took notice of President Lincoln beginning, 'fore score and seven years ago.'¹⁶ The worst accounting of this event stated simply that "the President also spoke." War correspondents were not quite ready for "prime time."

Despite the negative approach on both sides of reporting this war, one purpose was served. War correspondents developed as a new breed of journalists. This new breed of reporter would search the globe for conflicts to report.

The military's attempts to control the flow of information was evident throughout this entire time period. The military and the media missed yet another opportunity to cooperate, and the formation of this relationship remained in the embryonic stage.

Spanish American War (1898)

The period between the American Civil War and WW I is known as the Golden Age for news organizations. The military still failed to realize the influence that the written press could have on public opinion and, therefore, allowed them to report anything.¹⁷ The military and the media failed to use this time to work on their differences.

In 1898 Cuba had been involved for two years in a struggle for independence from Spain. William Randolph Hearst, owner of the New York Journal, had one of his correspondents, Richard Harding Davis, covering the plight of the Cubans. They were both sympathetic to the Cuban cause and believed that America should intervene on their behalf and attempted to sway public opinion by writing articles targeted at American emotions. One such article was Davis' "The Death of Rodriguez."

Davis had witnessed the public execution of a rebel and wrote:

As . . . I looked back, the figure of the young Cuban, who was no longer a part of the world of Santa Clara, was asleep in the wet grass, with his motionless arms still tightly bound behind him, with the scapular twisted awry across his face, and the blood from his breast sinking into the soil he had tried to free.¹⁸

Hearst also sent an artist, Frederic Remington, to put pictures to Davis' words. Remington found things in Cuba quiet and wanted to return to the States soon after arriving in Cuba. Knightley, in his book The First Casualty, relays a story about an alleged exchange of telegraphs between Hearst and Remington. Remington telegraphed:

"Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return." Hearst replied: "Please remain. You furnish pictures. I will furnish war."¹⁹

Shortly thereafter the American battleship Maine exploded in Havana Harbour. The Spanish would insist that it was an accident and that they were not to blame. Hearst, without the benefit of proof, blamed a Spanish "secret infernal machine" which inflamed American public opinion--Remember the Maine!.²⁰

Whether or not Hearst actually initiated American involvement against Spain is beyond the scope of this project, but these incidents do imply that the press can have an influence on public opinion that could trigger national actions.²¹

War coverage during this "Golden Age" also included the Boxer Rebellion in the Far East and the Russo-Japanese War. The reporting was generally accurate, but it could be argued that the press was just providing what the public wanted to read. The bottom line was always circulation. For the most part battles were far away from the public and the press could describe battles where friendly forces were brave and gallant and the enemy was devious and cowardly. Much of this would change with WW I.

WW I (1914-1918)

The First World War marked the first time that the military actively used the press as a tool to further their own objectives, in this case to foster support both at home and abroad. In some instances the press was a willing participant; in others they were just victims of a military that was beginning to understand the power of the press.

The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian Throne, and his wife in June 1914 set off a conflict, the likes of which had never been seen before. "It began with promise of splendour, honor and glory. It ended as a genocidal conflict on an unparalleled scale, a meaningless act of slaughter."²²

It was not long after the commencement of the war that the British realized that they would also have to fight a war of public opinion as well as the war. The professional army could easily be refocused on a new enemy, but the general population was somewhat uncaring about events on the continent.²³ As the atrocities of this war became evident, it was clear to the British government that the public would not support the war if the truth were known. Phillip Knightley, author of The First Casualty, argues that "the people had to be steeled for further sacrifices, and this could not be done if the full story of what was happening on the Western Front was known."²⁴ The desire to gain and maintain public support launched a great propaganda campaign.

The British imposed censorship in August 1914. The only effort to inform the public was to assign an officer, Colonel Sir Ernest Swinton to write official reports (which would also be censored by generals). These reports would then be forwarded to the press under the by-line "Eyewitness." Any correspondent found in France was arrested and expelled. This only led to the more enterprising journalists figuring out a way to get into the theater, mostly by travelling inconspicuously and staying away from the British. This led to some journalists remaining in France, but so out of position to report on the war that they might as well have stayed in London.²⁵

Reports continued to portray the Germans as "slightly better than the hordes of Genkis Kahn, rapers of nuns, mutilators of children and destroyers of civilization."²⁶

The Germans, who were winning the war at the time, could afford to be more open to the press. They were still waging a propaganda war; but, since things were going their way, they allowed correspondents to report from their front. This included the Americans who were also prohibited from entering France and reporting the war from the Allied side.

Americans had been taken by surprise by the war in 1914, but made it clear that Europe's problems were just that, Europe's. The country wanted to maintain its neutrality and that was mirrored by the press in their articles.²⁷ At the beginning of the war, neutral correspondents did have better access than those of England, France, and Germany and their articles gave a good rendition of the war without taking sides. A poll taken in late 1914 indicated that two-thirds of newspaper owners had no sympathy either way and went through great pains to ensure neutrality in reporting.

The relatively good accessibility was short lived as it soon became evident that the stalemate in Europe was draining Allied resources and that the United States would have to be drawn into the war. The British were aware of America's desire to stay neutral. In an effort to influence the American public through the press, the British propaganda agency enlisted a popular novelist Sir Gilbert Parker a Canadian by birth, to analyze the American press and determine ways to influence it.

Parker went about his task by compiling a list of names of people who were likely to be able to influence public opinion. He also targeted those correspondents already in England. Wickam Steed, the London Times' Foreign Correspondent, held regular meetings with American correspondents and tried to explain to them the British view of the war.²⁸

In 1917 America did enter the war. Incidents, such as the sinking of the Lusitania (sensationalized with headlines, such as "BRITISH AND AMERICAN BABIES KILLED BY THE KAISER" on May 10th in the Daily Times) and the German decision for unrestricted submarine warfare, served as catalysts for U.S. involvement in Europe. An intercepted message from the German Foreign Office to Mexico, proposing an alliance that would return New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas to Mexico should America enter the war,²⁹ also prompted U.S. involvement.

Knightley suggests that these events may have triggered an American reaction that actually came as a result of the propaganda effort. He says that American policy makers already believed that the conflict in Europe was already one of good against evil and that the leaders already hated everything German. Despite the fact that in the 1916 elections it was clear that the American public favored maintaining our neutrality, the leadership's view of Germany made war inevitable.

The propaganda effort did not end when America entered the war. It became evident that the American people were still reluctant when in the first six weeks of the war only 73,000 men volunteered. This resulted in the U.S. having to put together a conscripted Army. The propaganda effort evolved from one where the British were targeting

U.S. resolve to one where the Wilson administration itself would try to influence America to fight.

The President set up a committee, chaired by George Creel, a journalist, to pick up where Parker had left off. The Creel committee would sponsor 75,000 speakers in 5,000 American cities to arouse the people. Creel sent Lowell Thomas, an author, to Europe to cover the front and send stories that would stir America.

What Thomas saw at the Western Front, he did not believe would bring volunteers flocking to recruiters so he went to the middle east where he met T. E. Lawrence. Thus, Lawrence of Arabia was born. The propaganda seemed to have worked as the U.S. united to defeat Germany.

The picture of WW I painted by the press was inaccurate, but the press alone was not to blame for the inadequacies. There were circumstances that the press embellished or outright lied about, but this usually occurred as a result of restricted accessibility and pressure on correspondents to produce something. WW I afforded both the press and the military an example to learn from but, as coverage of WW II indicates, they did not learn many lessons from this conflict.

WW II (1939-1945)

The beginning of the Second World War saw little change in the military/media relationship. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 found the world economy still recovering from the effects of The Great Depression. In England unemployment was very high, and few cared to get involved or even understand the conflict that was brewing on the continent. This would cause another propaganda campaign much like that in WW I.

The British Emergency Powers (Defence) Act allowed the government to do as it saw fit in times of war. The Ministry of Information, planned in early 1936, was activated and would control coverage of the war, much as it was done in 1914-1918. Early in the war, the Ministry of Defence decided that this war would be newsless.³⁰ New technologies, such as short wave radios, would make it very difficult to restrict what was sent by correspondents. Officials decided therefore that correspondents would only have access to approved news. Correspondents would also be accompanied by "conducting" officers whose purpose was to censor news reports so as not to affect morale at home. Most of the information provided to the correspondents would be via official channels. This would be accomplished by having an official "eyewitness." Unlike WW I, the eyewitness would not be military, but a civilian with extensive journalistic experience. The journalist Alexander Clifford, formerly Reuters chief correspondent in Germany, was assigned this task.³¹ Clifford found this task difficult. It would be months before anything worth writing about was made available to him, and even then he was heavily censored.³²

The Germans also learned much from WW I. Their Ministry of Propaganda would serve much as the Ministry of Information in England, severely restricting information and shaping the images sent from the front.³³ These British and German practices would severely shape the image of the war in the U.S.

In 1939 it was doubtful that the U.S. would get involved at all. There was a reluctance to commit troops in Europe again and, even if the U.S. wanted to get involved, the Army was in no shape to do so. The

Japanese were viewed as a threat, but in the words of General George C. Marshall U.S. military forces were prepared to "set the paper cities of Japan on fire" should the U.S. go to war.³⁴

The attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 would shock the nation. At the time the U.S. Service Chiefs decided that to divulge the extent of the disaster would be unacceptable to the American public, and thus started the U.S. manipulation of information during WW II.

Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Secretary of State Frank Knox visited the site and subsequently gave a press conference in New York, where he stated that the only loss during the raid was the USS Arizona. He said that Oklahoma had capsized, but, that she could be righted. The actual battle damage count was five battleships--Arizona, Oklahoma, California, Nevada and West Virginia. It would not be until after the war that an accurate account would be published.³⁵

Pearl Harbor was but one example of how information flow to the American public was being shaped. "Truth and objectivity would have to yield to a wholehearted patriotic participation in the conflict."³⁶ The Second World War shows how complete the military's understanding of the influence of the press was, but the military was not the only institution at fault. The media failed to demand that it be allowed to cover the war accurately. The two institutions worked together extensively during this war, but again, failed to cooperate. The truth would seem to be indeed the first casualty of yet another war, and the military/media relationship would continue to evolve slowly.

Korean War (1950-1953)

A short five years after the Second World War, as the U.S. stepped-up its involvement on the Korean peninsula, the military/media relationship evolved more rapidly. Different approaches toward censorship were taken and the media began to rely on the military for some logistical requirements. The relationship evolved with both sides interacting more, but not really working together.

As a result of the Second World War, Korea was divided into a Communist north and an anti-Communist south. When North Korean aggression broke out in 1950, already strong anti-Communist feelings, in the U.S., predisposed policy makers, and the general public, to the belief that the Communist north was at fault. Regardless of who was to blame, the result was that the North Korean Army swept through the south, prompting the U.S. to call for United Nations intervention.³⁷

U.S. forces in Korea were ill prepared and suffered tremendous defeats. The early days of the war can best be described as chaos. The first correspondents to arrive in country were Keys Beech, of the Chicago Daily Times; Frank Gibney, of Time; Burton Crane of the New York Times and Marguerite Higgins of the New York Herald Tribune.³⁸ They arrived in Seoul as the North Koreans did, and they saw and reported the disorganized retreat of allied forces. U.S. forces fell back to Suwon which, after three days, also fell to the North Koreans. Marguerite Higgins wrote: "The events of that evening provided the most appalling example of panic that I have ever seen."

In the beginning there was no censorship at all, and the reports from South Korea painted a picture of desperation and chaos. The Army

accused the journalists of being traitors and giving aid and comfort to the enemy.³⁹ A voluntary code of war reporting was the only guideline available to journalists. This code was so ambiguous that correspondents were not sure of where they stood. This voluntary type of censorship was described by one correspondent as: "you write what you like and we'll shoot you if we don't like it."⁴⁰ This left correspondents in the unusual position of asking for full censorship as they had no other guidelines to go by. The military eventually ended self-censorship because of the negative effects this open criticism could have had on the overall war effort.

Lack of guidance was not the only problem facing journalists. They relied on the military for all logistics, to include transportation, lodging, and most importantly communications. The accommodations provided by the military were quite poor. Hal Boyle of the Associated Press wrote: "Never since and including the Civil War have correspondents had so few of the facilities vital to their trade."⁴¹ Press headquarters was one room in a government building. As a working space it left much to be desired, but the greatest problem was that they were afforded only one phone line which had to be shared by all. This greatly restricted their ability to file a story in a timely manner.

The Korean War ended in 1953, and coverage of yet another conflict can best be highlighted by the lack of cooperation between the media and the military. No efforts were made, by either the military or the media, to improve the relationship prior to the Vietnam Conflict.

Vietnam (1965-72)

During the Vietnam Conflict, the military/media relationship would evolve greatly. These changes would not be for the better, but it would establish an environment that would affect this relationship for years to come.

With the defeat of the French in Dien Bien Phu in 1954, American involvement in Vietnam was all but assured. As in Korea, a little over a decade before, Vietnam was another theater where a Communist influence threatened to consume a country, and U.S. will to promote democracy would be flexed again.

The Vietnam Conflict marked the beginning of a new era of combat coverage. For the first time in U.S. history, censorship, as had been used in the past, would not be used. Technology would render censorship an ineffective method of controlling coverage for the first time. The WW II type of censorship would not work, partly because correspondents were free to travel and could just file their stories elsewhere. More importantly, the military found it difficult to impose censorship since this conflict was not a declared war. Finally, trying to impose censorship in 1965 would be difficult since there had been some media presence since 1962. Vietnam would be the first war brought into American living rooms via television.

American presence in Vietnam started with 200 advisors and little to no press interest. It was not until 1960 that the press took any interest and that came as a result of 400 civilians dying in a South Vietnamese Army paratrooper revolt. The lack of interest of the press is evidenced by the fact that in 1960 only one newspaper, The New York

Times, had a full-time correspondent in Saigon.⁴² Little blame can be placed on the press for this lack of interest, as far as they knew nothing was happening in Vietnam.

Most articles that were written concentrated on the Communist threat in the area and the need for greater American involvement. The press also depicted the South Vietnamese as weary and stood no chance of defeating this communist threat without U.S. support.⁴³

During this conflict, the military supported the media better than ever before with transportation and facilities. The military provided the media with over 4,700 transportation runs, both air and ground, in one year.⁴⁴ The media, however, would contend that the military provided this support only to influence coverage. The military/media relationship was at its lowest point ever.

The root problem of this poor relationship began at the national level. The Eisenhower, and later the Kennedy, administration went through great pains to keep U.S. involvement in Vietnam as quiet as possible. Ngo Dinh Diem, the leader of the non-communist south, was also against any adverse publicity of his regime. During the early years of U.S. involvement the press was accredited by the South Vietnamese government. The South Vietnamese government saw no reason to allow stories that were critical of the Diem regime and would severely restrict coverage. The U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) fed press skepticism by trying to conceal the full extent of U.S. involvement in Vietnam⁴⁵ and attempting to use the press to downplay U.S. involvement in the eyes of the American public. Thus from the

start of U.S. operations in Vietnam any attempt by the media to convey the truth would face an uphill battle.⁴⁶

One Associated Press correspondent, Malcolm Brown in 1962 did file a report that truthfully explained U.S. involvement in Vietnam to include combat. His article appeared in the New York Times and other periodicals, and the response from the South Vietnamese government was swift. Action was not taken against Brown himself, but against two of his colleagues. Expulsion orders were issued for Homer Bigart, a veteran reporter for the New York Times, and Francois Sully, a stringer for Newsweek. Both correspondents had reported negatively about corruption in Diem's administration and about Diem himself.⁴⁷

The expulsion orders were rescinded, but not because the military in theater initiated direct action against the South Vietnamese. The State Department, anticipating an uproar from the media, put pressure on the Pentagon, who in turn pressured the MAAG who convinced Diem to allow them to remain in country. It was clear that this arrangement could not continue.

The State Department arranged for John Mecklin, Times Bureau Chief in San Francisco at the time, to go to Saigon and try to solve this problem. Mecklin's task was not to be easy. He was to work with the MAAG who was tasked to toe the company line that all the U.S. was doing in Vietnam was advising. The MAAG knew the extent of U.S. involvement and the dubious record Diem had as a leader, but had to mislead the press because of their tasking from Washington.

Mecklin's report stated that the MAAG told "endless little lies" to the press. This resulted in many representatives of the press

hurrying to the offices of the U.S. Information Services to tell them that they knew they were being lied to. American officials stated that this deception was necessary in order to stop the Communists. They appealed to the correspondent's sense of patriotism not to file reports that would damage national interests. When these appeals failed, officials could not understand why what had worked in WW II and Korea was not working here.⁴⁸

Perhaps correspondents could have kept their innocence and patriotism if they had not been systematically deceived. Until 1962 editors favored official reports. John Shaw of the Times said

For years the press corps in Vietnam was undermined by the White House and the Pentagon. Many American editors ignored what their correspondents in Vietnam were telling them in favor of the Washington version. Yet the Pentagon papers proved to the hilt that what the correspondents in Saigon had been sending was true.⁴⁹

In 1962 interest in Vietnam grew immensely. Many of the articles now stated that U.S. involvement was past that of only advising. Richard Hughes reported in the New York Times in March of 1962 that our involvement "has already past the point where aid can be distinguished from involvement." Francois Sully wrote an article in August of 1962 titled, "Vietnam: The Unpleasant Truth." This article resulted in his expulsion, despite protests.⁵⁰

Political and military leaders attempted to counter press skepticism by attacking their competence. Mecklin wrote an official memorandum categorizing the correspondents in Vietnam as "inexperienced" and "unsophisticated" and their reporting as "irresponsible" and "sensationalized." In spite of this poisonous atmosphere, the U.S. government would not impose censorship.⁵¹

Officials might have chosen to not accredit any journalist and provide official reports from Vietnam to the press in the U.S. They did not because this approach would have met with an incredible amount of protest that would have led to further complaints of a cover-up. Officials could also have restricted access to the press, but this option would have likely hurt public confidence. Thus, for the first time in the history of U.S. military conflicts there was no censorship. The press was allowed free access to pretty much anywhere they wanted to go, and no one was pleased with the situation.

To replace censorship, a set of fifteen ground rules was established for the press to follow. These ground rules were established to ensure operational security and the safety of U.S. troops. The press did not have to rely on official reports because many in the field were happy to tell their version of what was going on. By allowing a great number of correspondents to roam freely, officials lost control over what was being reported.

Having lost control over what was being reported, it would seem that the Kennedy administration tried to influence what was being published. There are many examples of adverse stories being filed by correspondents, but changed by their editors. One example is Time magazine's article by Charles Mohr, their chief correspondent in Vietnam, and Merton Perry. They had been tasked to write an article about the correspondent's problems with the mission and an overview of how the war was going. Their article started with "The war in Vietnam is being lost." When the article was published this line was gone and the article said that "American troops are fighting better than ever."⁵²

Correspondents were trying to write the truth, and in many cases were, but the American Public still did not seem to be getting an accurate picture of what was happening in Vietnam. A Gallup poll in 1967 revealed that one-half of all Americans did not know what Vietnam was all about. It was not until the My Lai incident was reported in 1968 that the American public started to realize that their perception of what was happening in Vietnam might not be accurate.

The My Lai incident involved the death of between 90 and 130 Vietnamese in the village of My Lai on 16 March 1968. One platoon from "C" Company, led by Lieutenant William L. Calley Jr., entered the village and opened fire on anyone they saw. An official investigation, conducted by the Army in 1969, revealed that those killed were not Viet Cong and were unarmed. Eventually Lieutenant Calley was court-martialed for the incident, but the real news is that had it not been for a correspondent in the States this story would never had been told.⁵³

The initial release was from Fort Benning, Georgia, to the Associated Press. It stated that Lieutenant Calley was being court-martialed for murders but did not specify the number of murders or what happened. This would have been the end of the story had not it been for free-lance reporter Seymour Hearst.

Hearst had heard from a lawyer contact that the Army was going to court-martial someone for the murder of 75 Vietnamese. After several days and numerous phone calls, Hearst found out that the actual number was 109 and eventually interviewed Calley himself.⁵⁴

Knightley states that after the My Lai incident many reports of war atrocities started to surface. Perhaps the reason for not reporting

My Lai was because correspondents believed that it was not really news, since after all death and destruction is what war is all about, or they could not get themselves to report such atrocities to the American public.

Whatever the reason was, this was not the last such incident in the war. After 1969 the war escalated to include Cambodia and Laos, but it would appear that the editors, producers, and subsequently, the American public believed that the war was all but over. This is evidenced by the fact that the number of journalists in theater decreased steadily from 467 in 1969 to 295 in 1972.⁵⁵

Many of the accounts of poor reporting and deception by American officials are one-sided and could probably be disputed. It is clear that those charged with keeping the American public informed failed during this incident.

The Vietnam conflict had a great effect on the military/media relationship. For the first time a change in the attitude towards censorship is noted. The lack of cooperation between the two institutions damaged an already unstable relationship. After the conflict the relationship could best be characterized by mistrust. This mistrust would be evident in almost every endeavor these two institutions would engage in for some time to come.

Grenada (1983)

The mistrust generated during the Vietnam era dictated how the military and media would interact during The United States' next military operation: The invasion of Grenada.

In the fall of 1983, the military was ordered to seize the island of Grenada. The press was excluded from the operation until the Joint Task Force Commander Vice Admiral J. Metcalf was sure that they could do no harm. For the first two days of the operation, the media was restricted to a neighboring island. Some journalists attempted to independently rent boats to take them to Grenada but were intercepted by U.S. Navy ships and held for two days.

What shocked the media the most was that the American public was unsympathetic toward their cries of foul play.⁵⁶ Polls taken shortly after the invasion showed, by an eight-to-one margin, that the American public sided with the administration in how the press was managed. Even the medical students that were rescued were supportive of the way the media was handled.⁵⁷

The uproar from the media resulted in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John W. Vessey, Jr. appointing a panel to study the military/media relationship. The Sidle Panel was a significant step in the evolution of the military/media relationship.

Sidle Panel (1984)

The panel appointed by General Vessey was headed by Brigadier General Winant Sidle, Former Chief for Public Affairs for the Combined U.S. Services in Vietnam and was further comprised of journalists, public affairs officers, and operations officers. They were asked to make recommendations on how the military could best handle the media in future operations. The following recommendations came from the panel:

- a. Conduct planning for news coverage at the same time as operational plans are developed.

- b. Devise a correspondent accreditation system.
- c. Mutually agree on a set of ground rules to replace censorship and encourage the media to voluntarily comply with restrictions on the publication of sensitive information.
- d. Develop a system of press pools. These press pools should be as large as possible with preference given to those with largest dissemination. Under a pool system, selected representatives of the news media are formed into small groups (pools) and allowed access to "restricted" areas on the condition that they share all gathered information with their excluded colleagues.⁵⁸

The most controversial idea coming from the panel was the idea of establishing press pools. These pools seemed reasonable as a way to lessen the logistical problem of trying to support potentially thousands of reporters in an area of operation. In October of 1984, the Pentagon established the Department of Defense press pool and all major news organizations signed up. The first real test of the press pool concept came during the Panama Invasion in 1989.

The Sidle panel recommendations served as the foundation that the Wheaton Conference would use to develop the DOD principles after DESERT STORM.

Operation JUST CAUSE (1989)

The Sidle panel recommendations would first be used during the U.S. invasion of Panama. Although a great step in the evolution of the military/media relationship, it was clear that more definitive guidance was required.

The press pools would get their first combat test in 1989, during the American invasion of Panama. This application of the pool concept was not a success. The media would claim that transportation was slow and that they were never where the action was. The media would also complain that they were under too tight of control.⁵⁹

The eight members of the National Media Pool were transported to Panama by the military. They hoped that they would be there when the fighting started, but they actually arrived four hours after the fighting had begun and spent the first day visiting sites where the fighting was already over. They felt that they had missed the war.⁶⁰

The military would also feel that the pool system did not work. They would argue that too much valuable transportation and logistical assets were used to transport the media. Again, it would seem that the military failed to work the problem. In two years the military/media relationship would face its greatest challenge.

DESERT STORM (1991)

DESERT STORM clearly demonstrated the extent the media and the military will converge during time of conflict. This operation would also illustrate the need for clear guidance on how to best incorporate the media into a military operation. From the very beginning of the operation, military/media interoperability was put to the test.

On 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces, as directed by Saddam Hussein, invaded Kuwait. This would trigger an American build-up in Saudi Arabia that would last six months and end with over 500,000 American troops in theater. When adding coalition forces, this number would total over

800,000. When the first U.S. fighters arrived in Saudi Arabia, no western reporters were in country, and none could get there because of Saudi visa laws. King Faud considered whether to allow reporters in and decided that he would only if U.S. armed forces brought them in. The National Press pool, which came about as a result of the Sidle Panel, was the only vehicle for the press to come into theater.⁶¹

As the operation evolved it became obvious that the national press pool was inadequate to handle the number of media personnel that eventually were allowed in country. On 2 August there were no representatives of any western press organizations in Saudi Arabia, by December the number was 800, and eventually the number grew to 1,400 as the ground war was about to begin, in January.

Ground rules addressing what could not be reported were also established. These ground rules were not intended to avoid bad press, but to ensure operational security and the safety of coalition forces.⁶² The rules included: (1) details of future operations; (2) troop strengths or locations; (3) specific information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations were underway; and (4) information on operational weaknesses that could be used against U.S. forces.

There was also no censorship during the Gulf War. A copy or security review system was used to ensure that reporters did not violate any of the ground rules. Reports were reviewed by public affairs escorts at the lowest level, and, if they saw no potential problems, the reporter was free to file the story. If a problem was identified, the report went up the chain of command, ultimately to the Pentagon Public

Affairs office where the editor of whatever news agency was involved was consulted. If the editor believed that the story was not a violation of the rules, he could run the story. Ultimately, whether or not a story ran was up to the news agency and not the military.

As a result of the review system, 1,352 pool reports were developed, of which only five were submitted for review in Washington. Four were quickly cleared and one involved an intelligence collection capability on the battlefield. The editor-in-chief agreed that this could present a problem, and the story was changed.⁶³

The coverage of DESERT STORM was extensive and it would appear that the American public was pleased with the coverage. A Newsweek poll found that 59 percent of those asked thought better of the news media after the war. A Washington Post poll showed that by a two-to-one margin the press had gained respect. An ABC/POST poll showed that 88 percent of those surveyed thought the military had gained respect.⁶⁴

Despite the overwhelming public support, the media was still unhappy with how they were managed during the conflict. The main complaints were against the pool system, ground rules and guidelines, official escorts, the security review system, access to information, and system availability to file their stories.

The media argued that the pool system served to direct them in their reporting, therefore, controlling what was reported. Susan Sachs of Newsday wrote that in the press pool you can "only get an ant's view of the war."⁶⁵

DOD Combat Coverage Principles

As a result of the experiences of DESERT STORM, DOD Combat Coverage guidelines were developed to assist the military to incorporate the media. These guidelines came as a result of the constitutional responsibility to allow the press access and also because of the realities of technology during the information age.

ENDNOTES

¹Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero Propagandist, and Mythmaker (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 4.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 7.

⁵Ibid., 10.

⁶Ibid., 11.

⁷Ibid., 13.

⁸Ibid., 15.

⁹Ibid., 17.

¹⁰Ibid., 20.

¹¹Ibid., 21.

¹²Ibid., 26.

¹³Ibid., 34.

¹⁴Ibid., 26.

¹⁵Ibid., 27.

¹⁶Ibid., 22.

¹⁷Ibid., 42.

¹⁸Ibid., 55.

¹⁹Ibid., 56.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹A more recent and well-documented example of how images from the media can lead to a national response is Somalia. It seems doubtful that had the American public not been exposed to images of starving children, and Somalians dying by the hundreds, the U.S. we would have been involved.

²²Knightley, 80.

²³Ibid., 82.

²⁴Ibid., 80.

²⁵Ibid., 86.

²⁶Ibid., 82.

²⁷Ibid., 119.

²⁸Ibid., 121.

²⁹Ibid., 122.

³⁰Ibid., 218.

³¹Ibid., 219.

³²Ibid., 220.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., 272.

³⁵Ibid., 273.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 336.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., 337.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 338.

⁴²Ibid., 374.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Susan D. Moeller, Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1989), 110.

⁴⁵The political reasons and objectives for the MAAG are beyond the scope of this project. The author intends to use specific examples to portray the antagonistic relationship that developed between the military and the media.

⁴⁶Knightley, 375.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸The evolution of journalistic values is beyond the scope of this project. Suffice it to say that American officials, at the time, had as much understanding of the press as the press had of war.

⁴⁹Knightley, 376.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 378.

⁵²Ibid., 379.

⁵³Ibid., 390.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 398.

⁵⁶James Pontuso, "Combat and the Media: The Right to Know Versus the Right to Win" Strategic Review 18 no. 1 (Winter 1990): 50.

⁵⁷Maura Clancey and Michael J. Robinson, "Student Attitudes", Public Opinion (February/March 1983), 52-53.

⁵⁸Winant Sidle, "A Battle Behind the Scenes: The Gulf War Reheats the Military-Media Controversy", Military Review 71 no. 9, (September 1991): 56.

⁵⁹Douglas Kellner, Persian Gulf TV War (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 81; Pontuso, 49-50.

⁶⁰Pontuso, 49.

⁶¹Kellner, 60; Pete Williams, "The Press and the Persian Gulf War", Parameters 21 no. 3, (Autumn 1991): 4.

⁶²Williams, 5-6.

⁶³Ibid., 2-9.

⁶⁴Ibid., 3.

⁶⁵Phillip M. Taylor, War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 270.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the Department of Defense Combat Coverage Guidelines is to allow for free and independent coverage that is imperative in an open society.

Analysis will be conducted by addressing each of the following principles individually: (1) open and independent reporting; (2) press pools; (3) ground rules; (4) access to units; (5) military Public Affairs Officers; (6) correspondents riding on vehicles; and (7) transmission facilities.

To subjectively evaluate these principles of combat coverage, the military and the media's criteria must first be identified and then compared.

Media criteria includes freedom of access, ease of filing procedures, competent escorts, available transportation, and communications facilities. The media's criteria result in free and open coverage of any and all units and operations at any time during a conflict.

The military criteria are that operational security must be maintained in order to achieve success and more importantly to safeguard the lives of American troops. There are times when the media's demands for freedom of access and the military's need for operational security will clash. The media's need for logistical support can also present a

problem for the commander because resources are limited. If limited resources are used to provide support to the media, they cannot support the war effort which is the whole purpose of the operation.

The principal research methodology was to review existing literature in an attempt to validate and determine sufficiency of each combat coverage principle. The majority of the literature from the military point of view was in the form of professional journals and periodicals. The primary source of literature from the media's point of view was in the form of books from primary sources with experience mainly in DESERT STORM.

In an effort to discern the latest trend of thought in this subject area, an effort was made to use recent literature. In some cases, such as with Knightleys' The First Casualty (1978), exceptions were made. Knightley provides a wealth of information that allows the reader to watch the evolution of the military/media relationship and the development of the DOD principles.

The general validity of the principles is established by the fact that the Wheaton Conference, originator of the principles, was comprised of both military and media representatives. Since both sides were represented and agreed on these principles, it is fair to say that the principles were validated by both sides. To further address the subject of validity the following questions will be asked of the principles:

1. Does it provide for adequate information flow to the public?
2. Does it grant sufficient access to the press?

3. Does it preclude timely submission of stories by the press?
4. Does it pose a risk to operational security?

These questions will be answered using historical facts as a reference, and the combined answers will further assess validity. The above questions may pertain more or less to each principle; therefore, each question may not be addressed in each principle.

In the area of adequate information flow to the public, operational security must be considered. Exactly how much information the public needs will vary with each situation, but a system must be in place to ensure that information, as can be divulged, is available.

The area of access to the press will be handled without concern for operational security. Access does not mean that print must follow. This subject will be addressed in full when analyzing the principle concerning ground rules.

For the purpose of this study "timely" will be defined by a 24-hour news cycle. In order for a story to be "fresh" the correspondent must be able to file it within 24 hours of the completion of his product.

Operational security need not mean that absolutely no information leave the area of operations. The principles must allow for the commander to know what it is that is being covered and afford him the opportunity to determine whether or not that specific information will have an effect on his operation or the safety of his troops. What is done with this information will be addressed more specifically when analyzing the principle concerning the security review.

The subject of sufficiency will be addressed by using case histories to see if, as written with no further guidance, the principles will accomplish the above. The purpose for using a single case study is because a principle need be insufficient only once to prove this study's point. This study cannot exhaustively analyze every possible situation in which the principles were relevant.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The validity of the Department of Defense Combat Coverage Principles was initially established by the fact that the Wheaton Conference comprised of both media and military representatives agreed on them. To further assess the validity of each of the principles the following criteria in the form of questions will be posed:

1. Does the principle adequately inform the public?
2. Does it grant sufficient and continuous access to the press?
3. Does it preclude timely submission of stories by the press?
4. Does it pose a threat to operational security?

An attempt will be made to answer each of these question for each of the principles, but clearly some of the questions deal more specifically with some of the principles, perhaps not all and with other principles.

Once the validity of the principle has been addressed the question of sufficiency will be dealt with. Sufficiency is simply whether or not the principles, as written and without further guidance, will meet the needs of the media and the military. A case study will be made to determine sufficiency for each principle. This study is not meant to be all encompassing and if insufficiency is proved once then

the principle can and will be categorized as insufficient to meet the needs of the military and the media.

Analysis by principle

Free and independent coverage

The principle states that free and independent reporting will be the principle means of coverage of U.S. military operations. This principle clearly serves to inform the public and has no bearing on access to the media or timeliness of reporting, but without further guidance it can infringe on operational security, especially when taking into account that one of the other principles states that no security reviews will be conducted.

This principle is valid and can be sufficient if adequate guidelines for coverage are established and adhered to.

Press Pools

Principles two and three address when the use of pools is appropriate and also what limitations should be observed (Appendix).

Press pools, as suggested by The Sidle Panel, should be a means by which a group of reporters could be transported by the military in order to ensure access and coverage where otherwise no coverage would occur.¹ The use of press pools is not consonant with free and independent coverage. DOD recognizes this and has caveated the principle by stating that they should be disbanded as soon as possible in favor of independent coverage.

Press pools can serve to provide access to units, inform the public, and provide for the timely submission of stories, but

mismanagement can and has precluded their effective use. Without more definitive guidance on the establishment of pools, and then the treatment of same, the media cannot be guaranteed fair treatment. In an attempt to do what they think is right, Commanders may overly control the movement of a pool unnecessarily, thus, denying access to a story.

Pools should not pose a threat to operational security. Although little documentation exists to corroborate this point, it stands to reason that since the military controls the pools and is also responsible to maintain the appropriate level of operational security, no significant threat to operational security should exist.

Since the initial recommendation by the Sidle Panel to implement pools, pools have been used on several occasions with questionable success.

The first time the pool system was used was during the U.S. tanker escort operation in the Persian Gulf in 1987. Sidle states "although there were some complaints it seemed to work adequately."² Marie Gottschalk, associate editor of World Policy Journal, stated that "journalists encountered problems quite similar to those they would experience several years later during the Gulf War." She argued that restrictions had little to do with preserving operational security and everything to do with the military's image.³ These mixed reviews make the adequacy of the pool system questionable.

In 1989, during the Panama Invasion the pool system was used again, but this time all agreed that it did not work well. The pool did initially accompany the assault elements, but once they deployed the press remained in the plane and did not arrive until four hours after

the fighting began and were not able to file their dispatches until six hours after that.⁴ Steve Komarow of the Associated Press stated, "We kind of missed the story." This access did not only affect those in the pool. Five hundred other reporters, who had travelled to Panama on their own, were held by the military and denied access to fighting in Panama City.⁵

Despite these early failures, history has proven that, as a contingency, a pool system is required. DESERT SHIELD/STORM is an example of how press pools can, not only be useful, but required. Saudi policy concerning visas precluded members of the press from attaining visas on their own. The only way they could enter the country was as part of a DOD pool system.⁶ In the future this may not be a problem, but the fact that obtaining visas was a problem once⁷ validates the establishment of pools as a contingency. Despite the fact that pools were initially required, the management of the pool precluded timely access to the area. The initial Iraqi invasion occurred on 2 Aug, but it wasn't until 13 August that the pool arrived.⁸ Initial elements of a rapid deployment force can be placed in theater in far less than eleven days.⁹ Representatives from the media should be able to accompany these initial forces.

The pool system has proven that it can provide access to military operations and units to the press. The principle, in practice, has demonstrated that without further guidance military commanders may still not adequately manage pools to best incorporate coverage in every facet of the operational plan.

Operations such as RESTORE DEMOCRACY in Haiti demonstrated that in some situations pools may not be required at all. Haiti was so accessible to all that reporters, such as Dan Rather of CBS, were in country prior to the military and consequently any press pool that would accompany the troops.

Pools are a tool that should remain as a contingency, but need not be employed everytime. The principle, as stated, does not guide the commander in his decision whether to establish a pool or not. Should the decision be made to establish a pool, the principle offers no guidance on how to best do so in order to meet the needs of both the military and the media.

Credentials and Guidelines

If the basic principle of combat coverage is free and independent coverage, without a security review, then reasonable and enforceable guidelines must be established and followed in order to ensure operational security and safeguard our troops. This principle states that journalists in the combat zone will be credentialed. It also states that failure to abide by the established guidelines will result in a forfeiture of credentials.

The validity in this principle lies in the fact that the press should be able freely cover a conflict, but must also accept the fact that they must report responsibly in order to preserve operational security and safeguard our troops and their families at home.

A prime example of how irresponsible coverage could adversely affect a military operation was the coverage given to the Marine amphibious landing in Somalia. The press, who knew before hand of the

landing, were waiting on the beach for the landing to occur. Their presence and floodlights left no doubt as to the location of the landing. In Somalia our Marines landed unopposed, but that will not always be the case. If any opposition would have been present the presence of the media would have tip the scale in their favor and the success of the mission and safety of our troops would have been compromised.

Do guidelines serve to adequately inform the public?

Guidelines do serve to inform the public while at the same time preserving sensitive information that could affect the operation. To adequately inform the public does not mean to furnish them with every piece of information all of the time. The public has a right to know, but they must also have a need to know before information is to be made available. If a piece of information does not adversely affect an operation then it should be released to the public.

Prior to guidelines, censorship was used to ensure no compromising information was published. During Vietnam guidelines were established and if a correspondent did not adhere to these guidelines he would lose his accreditation. Of the hundreds of correspondents present throughout the war only nine would lose their accreditation, and only two of those incidents seriously affected operational security or endangered troops.¹⁰

As long as guidelines are intended solely to prevent the publication of information that would jeopardize a military operation or endanger troops¹¹ they will serve to adequately inform the public.

Do guidelines grant sufficient and continuous access to the press?

The establishment of guidelines does not affect the media's access to troops or information. Guidelines should only affect how information is treated once gained. In the case of DESERT STORM guidelines restricted reporting of: (1) details of future operations; (2) specific information about troop strengths or locations; (3) specific information on missing or downed airplanes or ships while search and rescue operations were underway; and (4) information on operational weaknesses that could be used against U.S. forces.¹²

The key is to understand that what is restricted here is the reporting of this information, not the gathering of the information or access to units. If the military does not want the press to get this information then they must work at securing the information at the source.

Do guidelines preclude timely submission of stories by the press?

Guidelines have no effect on the timeliness of a story once it has been ascertained that the story indeed meets the requirements of the guidelines.

Do guidelines pose a threat to operational security?

Guidelines do not pose a threat to operational security. The sole purpose of guidelines is to ensure military operations are not jeopardized.¹³ The establishment of guidelines or ground rules is

intended to prevent the disclosure of information deemed vital to the security of U.S. (or allied) forces.

During Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM the guidelines spelled out twelve specific categories of restricted information: (1) number of troops, weapons; (2) details of future plans/operations; (3) specific location of forces or security at military locations; (4) engagement details; (5) intelligence collection activities; (6) troop movements, employments, or dispositions that could endanger operational security or lives; (7) specific identification of aircraft origin; (8) effectiveness or ineffectiveness of enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, or security; (9) specific identifying information on downed aircraft or ships while search-and-rescue mission was planned or underway; (10) methods, equipment, or tactics of special operations units; (11) specific operating methods or tactics; and (12) information on operation or support vulnerabilities that could be used against U. S. forces.

According to Pete Williams, Cheney's Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, these guidelines were established as a result of reviewing guidelines developed by Gen Eisenhower's staff for coverage of D-day, Gen McArthur's staff for coverage of the Korean War and guidelines established by the Military Assistance Command Vietnam in Vietnam.¹⁴ These guidelines appear to be reasonable and to address their intended purpose, but no where in the guidance does it address how to implement them--that is where the system breaks down.

Armed only with these guidelines commanders attempted to implement them by assigning escorts who at times severely inhibited

spontaneous reporting. In an effort to enforce the guidelines, escorts would determine where reporters could go and who they could talk to.¹⁵ On one notable occasion an escort threw himself in front of a camera because a troop uttered a forbidden word.¹⁶

Guidelines or ground rules are insufficient if they do not address implementation and how to deal with a story and reporter that do not comply with the guidelines.

Access to All Major Military Units

Access to all military units is essential if the media is to gather information at the source and subsequently inform the public in a timely manner. Guy Gugliotta, of the Washington Post, would say of DESERT STORM, "The real problem was access, getting to the story."¹⁷ In a survey of journalists who covered DESERT STORM the Gannett Foundation found that: "In order to get to their stories, most of the journalists interviewed said they occasionally violated the guidelines."¹⁸

Access should not pose a threat to operational security as long as the military emphasizes security at the source. Without a doubt this principle is conducive to providing the media the sources it requires, but, as written this principle does not guarantee access when needed. The military and the media must concur on a definition of access.

During DESERT STORM, "Reporters were on an Aircraft Carrier in the Red Sea to witness the launching of the first airstrikes, aboard a battleship in the Persian Gulf that fired the first cruise missiles ever used in combat, at the Air Force bases where the fighter planes and bombers were taking off around the clock, and with several ground units in the desert."¹⁹

This would lead us to believe that access was excellent, but what must be considered is the perspective gained from these locations. Onboard an Aircraft Carrier, as with an Air Force Base, reporters could cover the launch and recovery of aircraft, but gained no real knowledge of the strike. From a Battleship the media can see tomahawk missiles leaving a launcher, but what real information have they gained? At the beginning of the war, access to ground units meant endless hours of boredom in the middle of the desert as the war was being conducted by air.

The media must have access to major units, but this access must be in a way and at a time that it provides a true source of information. Access must be during a time the unit is involved in the war effort. Kevin Merida of the Dallas Morning News captured the essence of this problem in his coverage of the Panama Invasion. "The whole first day was devoted to taking us places where the action was already over. It was like forming a White House pool and then showing them an empty hall and saying 'This is where the President spoke.'"²⁰

The lessons of Panama were lost on some during DESERT STORM. There were many instances of access being granted only when it was favorable to the military.²¹ An example of how the press can have access to units, but still miss the story was the way coverage of bombing units was conducted during the Persian Gulf War.

Apparently only one reporter during all of DESERT STORM actually flew on an actual bombing mission (an estimated 72,000 sorties were flown during the war) even though many aircraft, such as the B-52, had ample space and could accommodate the press.²² Access to these units

was granted, but usually in the form of a ground interview with an Air Force Commander, or a preselected pilot.

Providing access to military units is not only a valid principle, but also a necessity if the media is to cover a conflict adequately. If the military is to assign reporters to pools and/or assign them escorts they must ensure that these reporters are guided to where the story is. History has demonstrated that without more specific guidance this principle does not sufficiently address when to grant media access to units.

Military Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) as a Liaison on a Not-to-Interfere Basis

A liaison between the military and the media is essential if both interests are to be served. The military cannot be expected to fully understand the media's perspective and vice versa. A conduit between the two is required and the PAO, if used correctly, can serve this purpose.

Do Military PAOs serve to adequately inform the public?

Military PAOs, or escorts could serve to adequately inform the public if they are used appropriately. If the escort system is designed, as Winant Sidle suggested,²³ to ensure that individual reporters or pools gain access to individuals, units or operations as well as to provide for the safety of press, then escorts will serve both the military and the media. However, if they are used to restrict and direct coverage then they are defeating the purpose for which they were intended.

Do PAOs serve to grant sufficient and continuous access to the press?

If the PAOs serve the function of getting reporters safely where they want to go, when they want to go there and assist them in gaining access to individuals, then the answer to this question is "yes". If, as on one occasion during DESERT STORM, the PAO is going to jump between a soldier and the camera anytime the soldier says something wrong²⁴ then the PAO is not serving the right purpose.

During DESERT SHIELD/STORM, PAOs as escorts were used extensively, but the relationship between the PAO and the media varied greatly. Deborah Amos of American National Public Radio stated that the most frustrating part of the pool system and PAOs was that you never knew what kind of escort you would draw: "you could get an angel or a devil."²⁵ The PAO's lack of understanding on how to apply the ground rules, or guidelines, led to the deletion of stories, such as Navy pilots watching pornographic movies prior to flying bombing missions. Douglas Jehl of the Los Angeles Times filed a story of how 50 military vehicles were missing. His story was initially approved, but later pulled because it was contrary to the best interest of the military. Another story about a desert disco organized by troops with a DJ named Scud B and a dance called the gas mask was reported and "when the stories appeared, the General was furious, and the PAO was given a serious rollicking."²⁶ In this case the General should have applauded the PAO for applying the rules correctly.

An argument can be made that these stories had nothing to do with covering a war, but, as they do not adversely affect operational

security and certainly do not endanger the lives of troops, the PAO should let the story be filed.

There are many instances of PAOs working exactly as they were meant to,²⁷ but these exceptions point out that there is a widespread problem of PAO/escorts understanding their role.

Another problem the military escort system posed is: how do you adequately provide escorts for a large number of reporters (1600 at the height of DESERT STORM) if your primary means for covering war is free and independent reporting? The Unified Commander-in-Chiefs (CINCs) have a PAO staff of perhaps ten trained individuals. This is clearly insufficient to handle the overwhelming number of media personnel that can be expected during a conflict.

Military PAOs are a valid and essential part of the military/media relationship. PAOs must serve as the link between the two, and it is up to the military to ensure that the PAO are properly trained and understand what their role is.

News material will not be subject to military security reviews.

This principle is valid, generally because the Wheaton Conference was comprised of military and media representatives approved it as a principle, but also because these security reviews, at times, severely restricted the timeliness of some reports.

During DESERT STORM, if the media representative and the PAO could not agree on the sensitive nature of the material in question, it was sent to the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) in Dhahran. If the JIB Director was unable to make the security determination, it was sent to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) for review by

the appropriate Bureau Chief. The final decision whether to present the information to the public was up to the originating reporter's news agency. This process can be time consuming and lead to a story becoming "stale" because of untimeliness.²⁸

The fact that coverage should be free and independent and not be subject to a security review could have an impact on operational security. During the Persian Gulf War, 1,351 pool reports were generated, with only one having an adverse impact on operational security (both the military and the specific editor agreed on this).²⁹ During Vietnam only nine (out of the hundreds) reporters lost their accreditation because of ground rule violations.³⁰ Depending on the importance of the specific mission involved, even one violation could have an adverse effect on the entire operation or unnecessarily cause the death of American (or allied) troops.

The success of this principle lies largely with the implementation of reasonable ground rules or guidelines and strict adherence to same.

The military will be responsible for transportation of press pools

This principle states that the military will provide for transportation of press pools and instructs commanders to permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. This principle is also validated by the Wheaton Conference, but also because if the military determines that reporters must be restricted to a pool, for whatever reason, then they must provide for their transportation.

The principle appears to exclude individual media representatives that may be covering a unit and it also fails to further define "feasible." In these days of diminishing resources, transportation for media personnel is likely to be one of the commander's lowest priorities, unless given specific guidance to the contrary. After JUST CAUSE military officers would argue that "valuable transport and logistical resources were squandered on the press operation."³¹ Whether or not these resources were "squandered" depends on perspective, but the fact that limited resources must be shared is a fact and this sharing will only increase as resources are cut.

In the case of DESERT STORM it would take the initial pool until the 13th of August to arrive in Saudi Arabia. This was eleven days after the Iraqi invasion. At the beginning of the war, in January of 1990, a C-141 was specifically used to transport media personnel. On January 17th, one-hundred and twenty-six journalists were transported from Andrews Air Force Base to Saudi Arabia (the Williams article does not state when they actually arrived in theater). This was the day after the bombing began.³² This means, even by generous standards, that these journalists would not arrive in country until two days after the bombing started. Such untimeliness can be avoided if the media is incorporated throughout the entire planning process.

The fact that an aircraft was made available to transport media personnel does demonstrate the military's commitment to getting the media to the scene of action, but the military can and must do better at providing timely transportation so they can get the story to the

American public. In neither of the above cases does it appear that these efforts occurred in a timely manner.

If in the future the primary means for covering a conflict is to be free and independent then the principles must address how the military is going to deal with the problem of transporting journalists attempting to freely and independently cover the conflict. If, because of limited resources, the military's intention is not to provide transportation for the independent reporter, then the principles must state that, so media organizations are aware of this policy and can plan accordingly.

The military will provide transmission facilities

This principles does provide for informing the public in a timely manner if facilities are available. The principle does not adversely affect access to the press or operational security, but, as with transportation, the overriding concern has to be the military's ability to provide this service taking into account ever diminishing resources.

In the case of DESERT STORM, once a pool had filed a report that had been cleared the reports were to be taken to the Forward Transmission Units (FTUs) which were usually located at the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran. The FTUs had direct satellite links with Washington and London.³³ This system did provide a means of transmission but resources were severely limited. One of the biggest problems this system had was the fact that many reports were lost or delayed during the transfer to the transmission site.³⁴ Whether these reports were lost or delayed on purpose or not is of little consequence,

the fact remains that the system doesn't guarantee timely submission of reports.

To further exacerbate the problem of limited resources some American television companies were refused permission to operate satellite dishes with the American military,³⁵ others just could not afford the equipment or services. The National Broadcasting Company (NBC), for example, spent from \$300,00 to \$700,000 a month for satellite transponder time.³⁶ Journalists did have access to AT&T special digital, portable earth stations placed in the Saudi desert for use by the troops, but they had to wait in line. Even these phone calls were expensive. During the war a call made on a credit card cost \$5.69 for the first minute and \$1.15 each additional minute.³⁷

The cost incurred by news organizations is of no concern to the commander. However, prohibitive costs will cause organizations with fewer monetary resources to rely on the military to transmit their stories,³⁸ and this does concern the commander.

Of course, television was not the only technology used to transmit coverage of the war. Other technologies (not all inclusive) used were: (1) E-mail, (2) digital transmission of still photographs, (3) facsimiles, (4) portable satellite telephones, (5) remotely sensed satellite imagery, (6) frame capture of video images to print, (7) portable laptop computers, (8) international data transmission networks, (9) flyaway satellite uplinks, and (10) computer graphics.³⁹ The principle as written does not provide either the military or the media with a clear picture of what exactly the military is to provide.

Much like transportation, if commanders are not provided with specific guidance, the media will not be supported adequately. The commander does not have the resources required to support both his military operations and the media.

ENDNOTES

¹Winant Sidle, "A Battle Behind the Scenes: The Gulf War Reheats the Military-Media Controversy" Military Review 71 no. 9, (September 1991): 56.

²Ibid.

³Marie Gottschalk, "Operation Desert Cloud: The Media and The Gulf War" World Policy Journal 9 no. 3, (Summer 1992): 457.

⁴Douglas Kellner, Persian Gulf TV War (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 81; William Kennedy, The Military and The Media: Why the Press Cannot be Trusted to Cover a War (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 116; James Pontuso, "Combat and the Media: The Right to Know vs the Right to Win", Strategic Review 18 no.1, (Winter 1990): 49; Sidle, 56.

⁵Gottschalk, 457.

⁶Kellner, 80; Pete Williams, "The Press and the Persian Gulf War" Parameters 21 no. 3, (Autumn 1991): 4.

⁷Everette E. Dennis, The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict - A Report of the Gannett Foundation (New York: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 27.

⁸Williams, 4.

⁹The 82nd airborne advertises 18 hours until their initial forces are wheel-up and enroute to the theater.

¹⁰Sidle, 55.

¹¹Williams, 5.

¹²Hendrick Smith, The Media and the Gulf War: The Press and Democracy in Wartime (Washington D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1992), 5; Williams, 5-6.

¹³Ibid., 5.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Gottschalk, 454; Phillip M. Taylor, War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 35.

¹⁶Williams, 8.

¹⁷Dennis, 26.

¹⁸Ibid., 26.

¹⁹Williams, 7.

²⁰Pontuso, 50.

²¹Kellner, 84.

²²Robert E. Denton, The Media and the Persian Gulf War
(Westport: Praeger, 1993), 15.

²³Sidle, 62.

²⁴Williams, 8.

²⁵Taylor, 52.

²⁶Ibid., 53.

²⁷Denton, 15.

²⁸Taylor, 56.

²⁹Williams, 6.

³⁰Sidle, 55.

³¹Pontuso, 50.

³²Williams, 4-5.

³³Taylor, 56.

³⁴Denton, 16.

³⁵Taylor, 51.

³⁶Dennis, 34.

³⁷Ibid., 35.

³⁸Denton, 16.

³⁹Dennis, 35.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

As stated in chapter four, the principles are validated by the fact that the Wheaton Conference agreed on them. Some of the principles are further validated by the fact that they make good sense. However, the DOD Principles for Combat Coverage, as written, are insufficient to ensure that media coverage is adequately incorporated into operational planning. The verbiage of the principles does not provide enough specific guidance and leaves too much up a commander, who is at the sharp end and trying to fight and win a war. He has much to think about and media coverage may not receive the proper priority.

Media is a business, and the principles have to take this into account. The media will most probably never be satisfied with any system for covering combat, but satisfaction is not the job of a free press. The media's job is to get the story and inform the public, while at the same time showing a profit or at the very worst, breaking even. Their ability to keep a secret may be suspect, but that does not preclude an open and honest relationship between the media and the military. Most journalists will understand the need for security and that only one breach may make the difference.¹ With reasonable guidance the author believes most media will responsibly cover and report a conflict. The relatively low number of reports that the military

believes affected operational security in both Vietnam and DESERT STORM seem to indicate this. The military must provide this reasonable guidance. The DOD principles are a solid start, but must be expanded if we expect them to work.

Specific conclusions reached for each of the principles are as follows:

Independent reporting

This principle is valid and will be sufficient, if the rest of the principles are reasonable and sufficient. All remaining principles must be subservient to this one. This does not mean that the military must strive to make every piece of information available to the media, but it does mean that independent reporting should be the foundation for developing the rest of the principles.

Pools

The principle addressing pools is insufficient in that it does not give the commander any guidance with regard to when a pool should be established or how to go about establishing the pool. These are items that must be addressed by DOD and not left to the commander. The commander must concern himself with fighting the war. Inclusion of the media should be dictated to him, lest he neglect the press in favor of his combatants.

The fundamental problem with the pool system is that the military has failed to provide for the different needs of the media, and it also does not allow for the natural competitiveness inherent in the media business. Having said this, history has demonstrated that, at

times, there will be a need for pools. It may be because of restricted entry into a theater of operations, such as in DESERT STORM, or because of the logistical problems inherent to supporting a large body of journalists attempting to cover a military operation. The military would do well to understand the needs of the media. This responsibility lies largely with those echelons above the operational commander, because on the battlefield he may not have the time to adequately consider the needs of the media resulting in less than adequate attention to the media.

When determining the composition of a pool the military has to take into account that small publications will have different needs than large ones. Publications that publish daily, weekly or monthly are also going to have different needs. Trying to provide for the needs of all these organizations in one pool can be difficult. The military has to take the time to understand the needs of those news organizations on hand if they are to incorporate them effectively.

Pools also result in homogenous reports that tend not to give credit where credit is due, and bylines are all important to journalists trying to make a living. The result may be ill will between journalists in the pool and those not and also between those in the pool.

The principle should address who will be responsible for determining whether or not a pool should be established as well as how to establish the pool. By doing this both the media and commanders will know where to voice any concerns they may have, as well, as where to direct any inputs they may have.

Guidelines/Ground rules

This principle states that the media will be required to abide by a set of guidelines, but it does not provide any guidance for who will establish these guidelines and how to go about determining what the guidelines will be. Guidelines will probably differ from situation to situation, but the underlying principle of guidelines will always remain the same and that is that guidelines will be developed to preserve operational security and safeguard the lives of friendly troops, never to protect the military from "bad" press that may be embarrassing.

At the very least the principle must state the above mentioned reason for guidelines and who will be responsible for developing them. Another aspect that has to be addressed is that, not only must the media abide by guidelines, but, military commanders must also play by the rules. This means that military commanders have to understand the guidelines and be held responsible for applying them appropriately.

The principle also states that media representatives that violate the guidelines will lose their accreditation. Whether or not this will actually affect a journalist's ability to cover a conflict is beyond the scope of this project, but the principle should also address the military's responsibility for abiding by these guidelines. The bottom line is that the guidelines must apply equally to all, military and media. An office should be identified for the addressal of grievances.

Access to major units

Access to units is essential as there is where the information can be found. We have seen that without further guidance the military

can provide access to the media, but still deny them information. This principle has to address the timing of access if it is to serve its purpose. The military must ensure that the media has access when a unit is doing something relevant. The principle, as written, does not assure this.

Public Affairs Officers (PAO)

PAOs are an essential link between the military and the media. PAOs can ensure that media representatives are where they need to be, when they need to be there, to get the story, but this is only possible if operational commanders include the PAOs in the planning.

This principle must address the commander's responsibility toward the PAO, as well as the PAOs responsibility toward the media. Another item that must be addressed is how do we overcome the problem of too few PAOs relative to members of the media. It stands to reason that the military may have to use personnel other than designated PAOs to escort the press. What training are we going to provide these individuals?

Military security review

The security review system, as used in DESERT STORM, proved ineffective because it delayed the filing of stories. Just because this system did not work in one conflict does not mean it cannot be made to work. Technology should provide an avenue for a quick review that would serve to ensure operational security while at the same time preserving the "freshness" of a story. Security reviews can be made feasible as long one centralized point is used for review and we spend

the money so that the reviews can be conducted electronically and paper copies need not be transferred from point to point.

Operational security is a must if we are to be successful and not unnecessarily endanger the lives of our troops. A security review system that both the military and the media can live with can and must be made to work to avert inadvertent information leaks.

Transportation and transmission facilities

Providing for the transportation and transmission for pool material is a valid, but somewhat unrealistic principle. Resource allocation and management is a problem commanders must deal with in their every endeavor. If this principle does not more specifically address what priority the media will have, the military runs the risk of commanders determining that the media will be the last priority. With dwindling resources the media may never be allocated resources in time to accomplish their mission. The media must be reasonable in its expectations of support, but the military must also be fair in allocating their resources.

Conclusions

The military's principles concerning combat coverage should, at a minimum, address the shortcomings of past experiences and hopefully look forward. No one can tell what future conflict will look like, but we have written a set of principles that does not even guarantee that past mistakes will not be repeated. We have a well of information to draw on and develop principles for dealing with the media. From the British experience in The Crimea through the World Wars, Korea and

Vietnam, but we are either unable to learn from these lessons or unwilling to do the right thing. The right thing is for the military and the media to work together, understanding the other's position, and dealing in mutual respect.

Technological advances will have an effect on how conflicts are covered but, the principles should be technology independent. DESERT STORM was a television war with almost instantaneous coverage. With technology advancing as it is one should expect that the next conflict will be even more so. With the exception of the security review the principles are technology independent. Reporters at the front must be free to go after the story. Realizing that the enemy will have access to CNN and other news sources the military must manage information at the source if we are to deny this information to the enemy. Clear and concise principles are required if this is to be accomplished.

It is clear that how the media cover a conflict and how the military deals with this coverage may differ by service. The Navy poses an interesting problem, because when at sea it is hard to get a good perspective of the war. The media can document the launching of Tomahawk cruise missiles or aircraft, but they do not get the full picture of the effect these system are having from the deck of a ship. Transmission facilities are even more scarce on a ship, and the DOD principles do not provide guidance to that destroyer commander as to which vital communications net he should give up in order to meet media demands. Similar problems are also evident in the Air Force. Unless the press is in the cockpit it is difficult to gain the Air Force perspective of the war. It is important that we realize the differences

in covering each service, but, the principles must adequately and equally apply to all.

As a personal sideline I believe that truthfulness and forthrightness must be addressed in these principles. Deborah Amos of National Public Radio said, "In this war (DESERT STORM) truth was more than a casualty. Truth was hit over the head, dragged into a closet, and held hostage to the public relations needs of the United States military."² The truth is usually in the eye of the beholder, but the military must strive to for a higher standard. Military officers are expected to be truthful and forthright, and usually are, but when dealing with the press do not seem to uphold this standard.

Coverage of the air war, during DESERT STORM, is a prime example of a lack of forthrightness. Military briefings to the press concentrated on the fact that "smart bombs" were enjoying a 90% success rate. What was not emphasized was the fact that "smart bombs" only accounted for seven percent of the explosives dropped on Iraq and Kuwait. The other 93%, or 81,950 tons, were unguided bombs and their accuracy rating was only 25%.³ This means that 62,137 tons missed their target.

This was not the picture the air component commander, General Horner, was painting for the American public. The military may have intentionally tried to deceive the public, or maybe the media just did not pick up on the entire truth. In either case, it is the military's responsibility to ensure that the information provided to the public, taking operational security into consideration, accurately depict the happenings on the battlefield. To do anything else is akin to lying and

lying is unacceptable and the principle should state this.

This does not preclude disinforming or misinforming the enemy and using the press to accomplish this. The target must always be the enemy, not the media or the American public. The relationship between the media and the military must evolve to the point where the military and the media can both be willing participants in a misinformation campaign with both sides trusting each other to do what is right in order to ensure success on the battlefield and safeguard our troops. There are difficulties and ethical dilemmas to be considered when contemplating a disinformation campaign, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this project.

As Arthur Lubow of The New Republic wrote, "In modern war, reporters must be permitted at the front, and they must submit to sensible censorship. Mutual mistrust is part of the shared heritage of soldiers and journalists in time of war. So is mutual accommodation." "It is to mutual accommodation that we must pledge our future efforts."⁴ With proper prior planning, coordination, and cooperation, the military and the media can peacefully coexist and accomplish their missions, but forthrightness on both sides is a pre-requisite.

Recommendations

In this age of ever diminishing resources the commander is hard pressed to get combatant and support units to a theater in a timely manner, let alone the media. If the military is serious about including the media in operations from the start then a slot on unit Time Phased Force Deployment List (TPFDL) should be allocated to press representatives. It is important that this be given careful

consideration, so as not to adversely affect the operational readiness of the unit. Both the military and the media must address this, because only a small number of media representatives would be able to go in with initial units.

If the decision is left to the commander, he may opt for delaying transporting the media in favor of units under his command. This attitude is only natural in a profession where failure may result in the death of those under your charge. Again, this must be given careful consideration, but if the military is serious about incorporating media coverage, a change to TPFDL should be considered.

The fundamental problem with the principles is that they are incomplete. When expanding the verbiage of the principles the following should be considered:

Press Pools

When addressing pools the principle should include who will determine whether a pool must be established and when. The principle should also address the composition of pools.

Guidelines/Ground rules

When addressing guidelines the principle should state the reason for guidelines which is to preserve operational security and safeguard troops, not to prevent potentially embarrassing stories from being filed. The principle should also address the military's responsibilities with regard to the guidelines. Who is going to establish the guidelines? How do we enforce them with no security

review? How do we ensure that members of the military are allowing members of the press to report within the guidelines?

Access to units

When addressing access to units the principle must state that the objective is to provide the media access to a unit that is fulfilling its mission. If the coverage is of a bomber unit then access should be when they are bombing, not sitting in the ready room, or out by the motor pool. More specific guidance must be forthcoming to ensure that the media truly has access and a sideline benefit from this is that the efforts of American sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines are seen and truly appreciated.

Public Affairs Officers (PAO)

When addressing the PAOs as escorts we must also address those who are not PAOs when serving as escorts. It is only reasonable to believe that because of large numbers of media representatives escorts, other than PAOs will be required. Who will they be and how will they be trained?

Transportation and Transmission Resources

Transportation and transmission facilities are very much resource dependent and the principle, as written, does not identify what priority the media is to be given. It also fails to address the military's responsibility to the journalist not in a pool. If the military is not going to provide these services to independent reporters then the principle should state this so that the media will know not to expect this support.

The above is just a sampling of what could be done to make the principles work better for both the military and the media. Again, the bottom line is that more specific guidance must be provided if the military is to ensure that the media is adequately incorporated into operations.

Topics for further research

A. How will technology affect media coverage and what can the commander do to effectively incorporate new technology?

B. What is the media doing to train correspondents and ensure they are doing the right thing in the field? Should the military have a say in how war correspondent are trained?

C. The right to win vs the right to know. How much information does the American public have a right to?

D. Can the military effectively deal with a large corps of journalist attempting to cover a conflict with a relatively small number of PAOs to serve as liaisons?

E. Should the military treat television differently from the printed press?

ENDNOTES

¹James Pontuso, "Combat and the Media: The Right to Know vs The Right to Win," Strategic Review 18 no. 1, (Winter 1990): 52.

²Hannid Mowlana, George Geraner, Herbert I. Schiller, Triumph of the Image: the Media's War in the Persian Gulf - A Global Perspective (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 254.

³Hendrick Smith, The Media and the Persian Gulf War: The Press and Democracy in Wartime (Washington D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1992), 194.

⁴Pete Williams, "The Press and the Persian Gulf War," Parameters 21 no.3, (Autumn 1991): 9.

APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PRINCIPLES

We believe these are the principles that should govern future arrangements for news coverage of the United States military in combat:

1. Independent reporting should be the principle means of coverage of U. S. military operations.
2. The use of pools should be limited to the Kind envisioned by the Sidle Panel. Pools are meant to bring a representative group of journalists along with the first elements of any major U. S. military operation. These pools should last no longer than the very first stages of a deployment - the initial 24 to 36 hours - and should be disbanded rapidly in favor of independent coverage. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering U. S. forces.
3. Some pools may be appropriate for events or in places where open coverage is physically impossible. But the existence of such special purpose pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage. If a news organization is able to cover pooled events independently, they may do so.
4. Journalist in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U. S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security guidelines that protect U. S. forces and their operations. Violations of the guidelines can result in suspension of credentials or revocation of credentials and expulsion from the combat zone.
5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units.
6. Military PAOs should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.
7. News material - words and pictures - will not be subject to prior military security review.
8. The military will be responsible for transportation of press pools. Field commanders should be instructed to permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible.
9. The military will provide PAOs with timely, secure, compatible transmission facilities for pool material and will make these facilities available, whenever possible, for filling independent coverage. In

cases where government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available and will not be prevented from doing so. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations.

10. These principles will also apply to the operations of the standing DOD National Media Pool.

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